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ABSTRACT

Although Switzerland is a small country, it has a highly diverse population, and with that diversity has come the potential for violence in the schools. In the last 2 or 3 years, school violence has become a major issue in Swiss education. This paper involves an intervention undertaken by specially trained school psychologists to reduce violence in targeted schools. The intervention begins with a conference with the teacher and evaluation of class problems. The teacher must agree to make at least one teaching change as evidence of the desire to cooperate with the intervention. A parents' meeting is then held, and parents also must agree to cooperate in the intervention. They are asked to talk to the students about violence and related issues. Intervention with the students follows, and the core of the intervention is a "mythodrama" presentation, in which students are told stories that relate to violence themes, but which have no resolution presented by the psychologists. Students are asked to imagine their own endings, and these student-generated ideas are explored to yield insight into class dynamics. Students are then asked to work to improve behavior according to plans they formulate. Followup work with the teacher, and a later class session with the students, complete the intervention. Research into the response of 120 children has determined that 66% of all students believed that their capacity to resolve problems increased because of the intervention, and 49% thought that the school atmosphere had changed for the better. The psychologists try to use the energy that had been expressed in violence in a positive way. (SLD)

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Steps Toward Positive School Culture: crisis intervention with teachers, parents and violent youth.
By Allan Guggenbuhl

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Steps Toward Positive School Culture: crisis intervention with teachers, parents and violent youth.

Dear collegues

"The only aim in giving my lessons was, that the pupils would take out their french books and put them on the desk: I failed! The pupils simply did what they liked, they walked out of the room, they were noisy, read comics or quarelled among themselves. It was impossible to teach. When I revolted, I was sure to have an angry parent telephone me the next evening."

Ladies and gentlemen, this is a statement made by a seventh grade teacher. The regular school course had broken down completly, twice the rooms had been flooded, vandalism was rife as was violence among the pupils. School had become a horror experience for everyone.

I now want to present an intervention programme, which should help teachers, parents and violent youth to tackle the problem of violence in school and reinstate a positive school culture, when normal schooling has broken down. I will refer to an intervention programme, which I developed at the educational counselling center in Bern and the Institut for conflictmanagment and Mythodrama. This intervention programme is used in various schools in the State of Bern and other regions of Switzerland. First I will try to describe the way we are confronted with violence in school, when schools system breaks down, afterwards I will give a brief psychological analysis of the background of violence, then I

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will proceed to present our intervention programme and our school culture programme. I will include some research results, done by the university of Bern, on the effectivness of this programme and make some final remarks on the main criterias of our programme.

Before I start, let me give you briefly some some information about our country, because I assume you are not all fully acquainted with the socio-cultural facts of our country. Switzerland has seven millions inhabitants. We do have some mountains, actually three third of our country is dominanted by these massive protuberances, the rest - the Midlands - is densly populated, one city follows the other *(the cities immerse in eachother?)* . This is were most of the people live, an area which is heavily industrialized and has the second highest percentage of foreign inhabitants. In some areas 20 to 30 % of the population are from another part of the world. So our schools are attended by pupils from various cultural backgrounds and in many school more then 50% of the pupils are not Swiss.

Switzerland has also been severly hit by the recession, so unemployment is, like in the other European countries, a big problem.

In the last two to three years violence at schools has become a major issues, after various nasty events ocurred: muggins, vandalism and even killings . So, when I now talk about schools, don't imagine a cute buiding on an alp, but buildings in cities or in a suburbian setting.

How does violence occur? When we hear of violence at school, clichées come to our mind: the hooligan with the baseball bat or the school bully terrorizing his school mates. In our experience violence at school has many faces, it does not become a problem in a typical way, but usually carries the trademark of the psychology of the school, the area of the town or the village. Violence at school often reflects the typical traits of the school or village. We therefore always first study the particular case. We have not hard and fast rules on whether incidents at school can be considered violent or not, we intervene when the pupils suffer or education has broken down. In some classes the pupils might fight a lot, but it is still not a problem, because they are not suffering, in other schools not much violence is evident, but when you talk with the pupils and parents, you realizes, that the situation due to verbal abuse is unbearable.

Open and hidden violence

Here I want to differentiate between open and hidden violence. Open violence concerns incidents, when something alarming happens, something, which comes to everbodies ears. The pupil, who was thrown out the window by the rest of this class and had to be hospitalized - apparantly he had refused to learn Schwizerdütsch, our swiss dialect - or the handicaped girl, whom members of the class started taking off the glasses and watching happily when she cried in desperation - a gruesame game:

At one school the owner of a shop selling CD complained to the teacher of the school next to his shop, that first grades were stealing his CDs. The teachers were stunned: these seven or eight year old boys and girls would certainly not steal CDs, they were not even interested in music. The shop owner kept up his accusations. We found out afterwards, that he was right, these cute little boys and girls were stealing CDs, but only after beeing ordered to do so by a gang compromising of seven and eight graders. The sales assitents had been warned about these juveniles, so each time they entered the shop they were checked and under special surveillance. The juveniles observed though, that no one played much attention to the smaller pupils, so they gave them orders to steal the CD's they wanted. They choose second graders, because the first graders were still not yet able to read and identify the desired discs. If they did not bring back the correct CD, they would be beaten up during the interval.

The teachers reacted and stated, that they were always on patrol during the intervals and would intervene immediatly, when anything happened. We discovered, that the eight graders would start a fight in a prominent area of the school, so the teachers would intervene there, in the meantime, while the teachers were distracted, all the other serious beating-ups took place. The pupils knew what was going on, knew, that they had to fraternize with that particuar gang, if they wanted to survive in the school premises. They liked the teachers, but thought they were more or less a decoration. The gang was the actual power group, one had to watch out with these boys and girls.

Cases of hidden violence are much more difficult to deal with, when nothing comes to the open, but we know, that the pupils are suffering.

In one school a class had developed a so called 60' game. During the shorter breaks, when the pupils were allowed to stay indoors due to snow storms or bad weather conditions and the teachers were in their staff room, a class would storm out of their room, rush into another classroom and block the door. Then three members of the class which rushed out of their classroom, would stand in front of the other class, pick out a pupil, drag him or her outside to the lavatories and beat him or her up. This had to happen within 60 seconds, that is why is was called the 60' game. What was really frightning, that nobody knewn of that game. Astonishingly was the fact, that this particularly, aggressive class had the reputation to be the best and most disciplined in the whole school. The inspectors had given them the highest marks and praised the teacher for his outstanding work! Psychologically we can understand this mechanism of course: they cooporated, acted dutiful towards the teachers, because they know there was something sinister going on. They covered up there bad conscious.

I could give many more examples of hidden violence, but let me give you one more example, just to show, how concealed violence can. Even more difficult to detect are violent sexual offences, pupils are at great pains to talk about their violent sexual experiences, because this is

something you do not talk about to a grown up. In a school we had to deal with a girl, she was the only girl in this class, who was repeatedly raped by other members of the class, during intervals, in the class room. This event went on for more than a year without it beeing found out. Only after one of the pupils was questioned by the police for a burglary and had apparanlty bragged about 'worse things that they did at school', were the police sensitive enough to ask what he meant.

How could all this happen? The class room was on the third floor, while the teachers staff-room was on the ground floor. The teacher was a tall, relativly corpulent person. The pupil knew, that it took him some time to reach the third floor. So during and after the main break, when they had to stay in their classroom, they had put up a guard post in front of their classroom and had also posted someone on the first floor. They gave a warning signal when their teacher was about to come, as they knew it took him some time to get to the third floor. This way everything could be nicely covered up.

(The victim did not say anything herself to, she was afraid to be excluded from class, no more a member of her peer group. Apparantly there was one incidient, where she had perhaps tried to say something: the teacher was at his desk correcting, she had to deliver a paper. After having done so she did not return to her seat, but just stood there. The teacher said, what was the matter. She was mute. He asked again, while he was correcting, but she could not say a word. Finally he said, either you say something or you return to your seat. She then turned around

and went to her seat again. Maybe that was a feeble attempt to say something.)

Violence at schools has many faces and makes school to a horror expericence for many pupils. According to a survey two thirds of the pupils experience violence at school. When you know that you have to deliver 5 Francs to a gang, so as not to be beaten up, when teachers don't dare to walk through a gangway for fear of beeing attacked, when coloured pupils are confronted with racism, well-adjusted pupils are forced by their peers to consume drugs or pupils are only respected in their schoolground when armed, then something has to be done. In situations like these we school psychologist have to think of ways to alleviate the situation. These are emergencies which demand our help.

First two important observations

When talking to the pupils, to the perpetuaters of the trouble, one is suprised to find, that they are no violent youths! Facing the children or juveniles eye to eye one is surprised to find, that the overwhelming majority express the same views as the teachers and parents do: of course they abhorr violence and are not all violent, they tell you. Maybe, if they would get attacked they might use their fists for self-defence, but personally they despise violence as a mean for conflict solving. Violence occurs at school, they add: especially some pupils of they other class or the albaniens for instance are violent, they themselves of course behave decently. The pupils might tell you stories of violence in school, but of

course they are never to blame personally. Now, it would be easy to say, that these children are lying, but I am convinced that this is not the case: most pupils are absolutly sincere, when they assure us, that they want to avoid violence and they personally don't believe in violence at all. Who then, causes the trouble?

Another obsevation I make repeatedly, is that as soon as the children or juveniles are among themselves, they immediately forget what they said.! Altough they might have told you sincerly, that they personally denounce violence or harrassment, minutes later you might catch the same child in a fight, attacking somebody vigourously. I remember having a conversation wiht 12 year old boy. He impressed me with his sound and clear statements against violence. If we don't start working on ourself, how can we ever hope that the world will be without wars! I was genuinely impressend. Half an hour later I saw that same boy visciously attacking a group of other school children: "It's not my fault" he would say. "The others looked at me in an impudent way!"

Psychologically this mechanism is commen knowledge. We have great difficulty in accepting our ugly, problematic personality traits! We tend to ideolize ourselves and externalize our own unaccepetable violent sides. Perhaps this is the only way we can survive, as saying by Galsworthy goes:"The ability not to see ourselves as others see us, is wonderful attribute for self-preservation." We project our own brutality on to the outside world. Subjectivly we have the feeling, that it is the

others who are to blame. We only react violently, because we are provocated, attacked, harressed or insulted.

In contrast to love we quote external factors, when we deal with violence. This is even more the case, when we deal with violence among children: the media is to blame, children are not educated, mis-guided or society is at fault. Often a lengthy psycho-histories are created: violence becomes understandable, because of traumatic early childhood experiences, the enviroment or a neurotic parents. References like these might be plausible, but at the same time they increas the danger, that we elude our nasty, violent shadow. Violence is unbearble, so we have to react in this way. We want to preserve our definition of ourselves and our dearest, the children.

Because of this psychological fact rationally orientated or educative programms dealing with violence at school have very little effect. Consciously everbody is against violence and all are in agreement, when we postulate a non-violent conflict model. The problem is however not on the rational level, the behaviour of us human beings is often irrational and dependent on other, subconscious forces. Because of this problem our interventions do not spend too much time finding out the causes or concentrate on the standard of education. Indoctrinating children or juveniles with basic catch-phrases, distributing leaflets against violence, putting juveniles through an educative programme has often little direct effect, because violence is externalized by the juveniles. The brain can always formulate excuses which sound logical.

This way the children can behave violently and yet still keep a personal acceptable defintion of themselves.

Consider the torturers in Nazi Germany or in Argentinia: acoording to their statments they were all non-violent! They were forced to behave as they did because of circumstances or other forces.to act, they themself were of course not at all violent people.

Our intervention is based on the assumption, that in schoolclasses nobody can be held directly responsible for violent acts or the break down of schooling, as all believe to be led by noble intentions and see themselves as victims. Because of our inability to identify our personal responsiblity, we work with each involved party during our interventions, be it the class, the teachers, the parents. We start with the idea, that we all carry violent traits within ourselves and the problem is not solved, when we concentrate on causes or on particulary aggressive juveniles.

But now to our actual intervention programme:

Where there is violence, there is also a lot of anger, intense emotion, confusion and disorientation. Parents are enraged and deeply hurt, when their children are victims and teachers are frustrated and in desperation, when they cannot do anything to curb the problem. In this chaos, when all blame eachother, a decisive path must be taken! A clear concept, which everyone can cling to and can hopefully sort out

the mess is needed! This is why we set up a seven point programme, which is applied, when we are asked by the teachers, a parents group or the school administrators to intervene in a particular class or school. The seven steps are considered as a whole. The ages of the pupils in the classes we intervene range from eight to eighteen. The majority of the pupils are between ten and fifteen.

Example: turn around he ambulance!

1. Talk with the teacher

The very first step is to talk with the teacher. The teacher or group of teachers, who are responsible for the class, have to be motivated right at the start for the program. We begin our intervention only with the teachers consent and their willing cooperation. We arrange these talks with the teacher outside the school premises. We need to see them away from their territories, because only then will they talk freely and let us know, what is really worrying them. They are often under pressure in school, feel they have to conform with school dogmas and are unable to criticize their collegues. In this talk we try to find out, how violence occured, what excatly had happend and what had been done about it up until now. We also want to know, what their opinion on the behaviour of the children is and how the relation to the parents stands.

The history of the class is of vital importance. What had happened in the past has often an effect on the present situation of the class. Have any pupils been relegated or how many teachers gave up teaching this particular class? A class might build up a negative identity. They think: "We can get rid of any teacher, we are stronger than they are."This negative identity might be a way of avoiding personal contact . These ghosts from the past have to be considered, because they might have an effect on the way a class feels at present.

Of course we also consider the teacher's past, what were his or her motives on becoming a teacher. How does he relate to the younger generation? Often teachers look on themselves subconsciously as collegues of the children, they think they personally have an excellent relation to the next generation. In contrast to some old boys in the house they understand the new generation perfectly, because they are of course still open for new impulses and sponteneous enough to be accepted by the young ones. In my experience children reject this attitude firmly: they see in the teacher not only an individual, to whom they can relate, but also an archetypal figure. They see in him or her a collective figure, someone they can like, admire, but at the same time reject, fight and loathe. A figure they can confront, which helps them to put their own generation in relief and gives them the feeling of bringing something new into this world. This is why they want to see the teacher also as an old clown, someone, who does not belong to their generation, someone who is "past it". Often teacher are not aware of this doppel aspect of their job.

(Another commen projection is the divine child. These teachers project an image unto the children, they seen in them beings, who possess other qualities then grown - ups: children are more sponteneous, genuine, more creative then grown ups are. This, in my opinion, false image annoys children intensly and incites them to react, to let their demons out and perhaps even behave violently.)

After talking together we make a contract with the teacher. We tell him, that we are willing to work with him, but during the programme we set ourselves a particular role: we are advocatus diaboli, the devils lawyer. We may have to tell him or her certain revelations about his teaching methods and his dealing with the pupils, which he or she may not relish. We will not flatter, but let him or her know everything we observe. This is our methode, but at the same time it is of course quite up to him or her to act out the results. Our information is confidential. Often the teacher knows quite well what should be done at school, but he does not dare to take the necessary steps, because he anticipates the reactions of the parents, pupils or collegues and therefore is inhibited.

We make only one condition though, this is, that he has to make one manifest change in his teaching methods or his way he is dealing with the pupils. What it will be is entirely up to the teacher. But is has to be made clear to the pupils and to the parents, that the teacher also works along with the programme of intervention.

2. Parents evening

The next step is a meeting of the parents. All the parents of the particular class we intend to work with are invited to a meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to inform the parents of the idea behind our intervention, to hear their views about the difficulties at school and finally to persuade them to cooporate. The meetings usually follow the same routine: they start with a statement by the teacher. He introduces us and informs the parents, that he has asked for our help in working with the class and finding ways to curb violence. The teacher has to stress however, that also his teaching will also be scrutinized and maybe major changes will have to be made by him. We are all in some way responsible for violence, is the message. This primary statement is very important, because often the parents are convinced, that the teacher failed his job and that he is now trying to pass on the blame to his class. When we make it clear, that all parties are involved in the programme and that we are not just aiming at the school bullies the parents are reassured.

After the introduction we inform the parents about the programme. We point out, that we will work with the class as a group and do not pick out individual pupils. We focuse on the ressources of the group and are not particularly interested in the school bully. This again is very important, because some parents fear, that their son or their daugther might come under the influence of a psychologist, who secretly gives therapy to

their child. As a considerable number of parents abhor this idea. When we emphasize though, that it's group work we are interested in, these parents are relieved.

We now proceed and talk to the parents in two or even three sub-groups. Without the teacher present the parents can express openly their opinions of the school and the teachers. Its very important for us to know, how the parents feel and what they are told by their son or daugther. Parents talk to us under the seal of confidence. That is why they feel they can give us information, which they might otherwise hold back from the teacher. Strategic reasons make it unwise to confront the teacher with criticism, who knows, the sons or daughters career might suffer.

After the talk in seperate groups all parents come together again and the groups inform eachother on the subject of the discussion. We now come to the last part of the evening, namely: the parents decision, whether they want an intervention in their class or not. They have to decide unanimously, all parents have to be in favour of the intervention and back us and the teacher up during the intervention. We make it quite clear, that when only one couple, or one father or mother is against our programme and does not actively back us up, we will <u>not</u> work with the class. Our condition is, that <u>everbody cooperates</u>: if ther're opponents under the parents we leave and do nothing.

This is not just a cunning game, we use this methode, because to our experience the chance, that our programme is succesfull increases considerably, when all the parents back it up. The parents do not always believe, that we are sincere, when we present them with this choice. A lot of parents think, that we psychologist more or less have to help, we cannot do anything else, since we have to legitimize our existence. Often it takes some tough discussing to make the parents realize, that our intervention programm is nothing but a possibility. When they don't take the offer, we leave the premises and the parents can see, how they will tackle the problem on their own. We are not responisble for the children, all we do is offer some help.

What we acutually do is manipulate. We do put the opponents of our intervention under a certain group pressure. They would have to oppose our programme openly. This group pressure plus of course the fact, that the parents usually do care for their children and are concerned for their future, makes it extremly rare, that someone does oppose our programm. The parents practically all agree and are more than willing to cooporate.

To cooporate means, that they have to say to their children, that important, perhaps decisive work will be done with them. They themselves have to talk about violence. They have to make their children aware of the issue of violence, but they don't have to enforce any solution.

As you can imagine the evening with the parents can turn out to be very emotional, parents start screaming at eachother, trying to put the blame on other issues, shouting at the teachers, the officals or even at us. The parents are annoyed, angry and therefore the emotions run high, but without their explicit cooporation we will not begin. When they don't express clearly that they are willing to cooporate, our programme won't continue.

3 Visit of the school

The next step is to visit the school premises. We have to get an impression of the buiding, the teaching methods that are used, the suroundings of the school buildings, the atmosphere during the breaks and the behaviour of the children within and without of the school. What is beeing discussed among the teachers and how the school is organized internally is of interest for us. Of course we visit the class once or twice, in order to get an impression of what is going on during lessons.

We don't pretend to get a thorough analysis of the school, what we need is an image, so we can relate to the school. In order to work with the class afterwards, we have to have an impression of the pupils. This image does not have to be correct, but it will be the first step in bridging a contact to the class and will help a lot in preparing the programme.

4. The Mythodrama

Now begins the most important step of our programm: the mythodrama, the group work with the class. The class is assembled in a gymnastic hall. They know, that we will work with them in order to curb violence, but usually they don't know what excatly expects them.

Decisive for our work is the way we approach the class. We don't introduce ourselves as understanding and patient psychologists, who are willing and eager to relate to them personally, but we present ourselves as gang leaders. The children or juveniles are greeted in an impersonal, sightly autoritarian way. We don't look for an individual contact with the children, don't look in their eyes or shake hands, but address the class as a whole.

The reason we present ourselves this way is, that often the gang leaders in class come forward and want to shake our hands, address or provoke us. They are trying desperately to keep their position in class, therefore they want to prove to the others, that they are not threatened by these strange psychologist, who come from the outside. When we refrain from personal contact, act cool and autoritarian, the class is irritated: the structure of the group, the hierarchy within the class are being questioned. The group leaders, the school bullies cannot reaffirm their position by showing themselves as the leaders in front of us. This way we can promote change in the class. Due to this irritation the class as a system has to reorganize.

After having set up our position we initiate group activities. We usually do so-called social awarness exercises or activities, which help the pupils to become conscious of the group dynamics in their class. Often we apply techniques derived from Psychodrama. The pupils might have to communicate with their hands or try to express something with their bodies. The idea behind these exercices is to help the children to feel as a group and get acquainted with other means of cummunication, than violence.

After these exercices we ask the children or juveniles to lie on the floor and close their eyes. After some relaxation we tell them a story, myth or legend, which expresses indirectly the problem we anticipated or already diagnosed in the class. With younger pupils this can be a fairy tale, for older pupils we choose a 'true stories', but which could of course actually be myths.

The stories we relate are not educative. They often contain gruesome, bizarr scenes: people get lost, drowned, are beheaded or strange monsters appear. The stories can be brutal and do not all present any answer to problems. Again, the purpose of these stories is to irritate the pupils, to puzzle them.

Schools are institutions, which are based on our belief in correct answers. Our ideals and our moral values form the foundation of education. The purpose of schooling is to introduce the next generation into our positive vision of the human being. Schools should therefore

promote social competence, diligence, truthfullness, creativity apart from the basic skills like reading and writing. The psychological problem the children are left with is, that the shadow, our ugly, unflattering sides are excluded in this basic concept of education. Children feel this, they realize, that when they are in school the are in a temple of the right answers. It is understood, that the hideous aspects of our personalities are not welcome in schools. The problem is, that often children react unconsciously to this over optimistic, one-sided view. They bring back the demons, which we are trying to ban, through their misbeahaving. Their fascination for aggression, power games and the hideous is partly a reaction to our tendency to fake our children a nice pretty world. This image is false, as the children fully realize, that in the outside world and in themselves there sombre forces. Children are beings of flesh and blood and their fascination for the seamy side of life cannot be ignored. Of course we want to bring up our children on the bases of our ideals, but also we need to confront them with the abysmal, the ugly sides of live, something,which they experience within themseves too. By telling gruesome stories we bring back the chtonic powers, which we usually exclude. The underworld is present again.

Children usually don't expect such a story and are surprised. We don't tell the story until the end though, but invite the children to imagine the possible ending. Lying on the floor, with their eyes closed they have to fantasize the end of the story. In psychotherapy imagination is known to be a potent factor to bring about change and see other perspectives. In Mythodrama we try to transfer the fears, the difficulties, the ambitions

of the children into the realm of the imaginal, by using a story as a steppin stone. Want the children to imagine horror, rather than act in out.

After the children fantasized the end of the story we work with the contents of these endings. The children might draw their versions, paint them or act them out in groups. We now divide the class into groups, often seperating the girls from the boys and then begin to talk about what they produced. As you might guess, in the pictures or acted out scences the children unconsciously depict the psychological situation they are in. The drawings give us important hints on what worries the children have, but also what their resources might be. The children show us and their collegues their pictures or we might talk about the scenes they presented. We then try transfer the interest to their situation in school. What they have drawn, painted or acted gives us an indication of what they experience in school. Having the drawing in front of us or having seen their plays we ask them, what the situation in school is like. Using this indirect methode we can find out, what bothers the children and what they experience. When a girl fantasizes the main character as beeing locked up at the end, she might indireclty express her fear in class.

After having talked with the children about their productions we proceed to the next step. The class is assembled in a circle. We sit on the floor and have a so called round talk. We tell the children or juveniles, that the only single thing we want from them is, that that they

unanimously decide on a concrete change in their classroom or their groupe behaviour. It has to be something, which is very evident, something all can see, whenever they enter the classroom. We give no suggestions; it's up to the pupils as a group to produce the idea. The changes the pupils decide can have a connection to the problem of violence, but this is not absolutly necessary. Classes decide for instances, that they want to change the way their desks are arranged in their room, they might decide, that from now on they all belong to a Club, which prevents further violence or they might decide, that the hallway should be newly painted.

When the class as a group is able to decide collectivly on a change, this increases their feeling of togetherness. The pupils feel they are a class and as a group they have enough strength to influence what is happening in school and the playgrounds. They are not just victims, but are able to take their destiny in their own hands. The changes, which the pupils propose, usually are not decisive measure against violence, but important steps on the way to obtain a positive group identity.

The next day the children present their decision to the teachers. He has the veto-rigth. Strangely enough he hardly ever does he have to make use of it, because the changes the classes propose are usually sensible.

(With the younger classes, up to sixth grade, we work three afternoons like this. Twice they have to decide on a change, with older children we work half a day, afterwards we see them a whole day or even a day and

a half. We need longer with that age group, as they cannot be reached in one afternoon.)

After having worked with the class this way three to four times on weekly intervals, we then leave the children to themselves. We tell them, that we will be coming back in approximatly half a year. We tell them, that we expect from them, that the situation in the class has permantly improved.

4. Counselling of the teacher

During the next six months we work solely with the teacher. We want to make sure, that the measures, which have been taken by the teacher and the class are effective and violence does ocurr more seldom. We keep in contact with the teacher by phone and the occasional talk, every two to three weeks. Usually the teachers by then have great confidence in the school psychologist, because working with the whole class he was confronted with the same problems as the teachers had. The advice we give is not on the basis of nice theories, but on basis of personal, often challenging experiences with the class. The school psychologist therefore can understand the teacher better and can give concret advice.

5. Final intervention

After an interval of six months we visit the class again. We work with the pupils only one afternoon, during which we want to find out, if the

situation has improved permanently or if violence might still be a problem.

Often the pupils tells us, that we are not needed. That they don't want a shrink, that they are normal! This is a sign, that the situation in class has gone back to normal.

6. Parents meeting

Our intervention closes with a parents meeting. We promised the parents at the beginning of the intervention, that we would give them a excact account of how we have experienced the class, what has happened and how we asses the situation. The parents then give us their feed-backs. Usually these parents meeting are unproblematic, because the parents are glad, that it is all over and their children don't suffer anymore.

Sometimes after the intervention the teachers decide to participate in a school-culture-programm, which we organize. In this we work with all the teachers of a particular school. By doing a Mythodrama with them we help them to set up common goals in order to tackle violence. In these one to two day sessions with a team of teachers or all the techers of the village or town, we want the teachers to become aware of their hidden team difficulties, tackle their overt problems and set up a common strategy against violence. As with the classes we also work in small changes, which have to be decided upon by the team of teachers.

Unfortunatly due to the time I cannot describe in detail what we do then and what our experiences are.

Research results

Let me give you some results on the research that has been made on our crises intervention. Personally we get a lot of encouraging feed-backs from parents and teacher alike, so doing crisis intervention is strenguous, but very satisfying, because you have the impression you are out there doing something which brings an immediate results. The university of Bern developed a questionere for the pupils and did some in-depth interview with the teachers, which were involved in a crisis intervention. Let me give you some results:

66% of the children of our sample of 120 children had the impression, that their capacity to solve conflicts has increased after the intervention. 76% of the girls, 56% of the boys. Interesting enough the percentage rises to 73% among the foreign pupils. The intervention seems to help them tremendously and give them some orientation on how to deal with violence in a foreign country. The results are more or less the same, whether the intervention was three years ago or had just happend recently.

49% of all the pupils have the impression that the athmosphere has changed positively due to the intervention, 47% did not dedect a lot of

change and 4% think the atmosphere became worse. Here 53% of the girls think it got a lot better and 64% of foreign children feel there has been an destinct improvement in the atmosphere. Again, its seems that the pupils from foreign countries profite the most.

According to the interviews the overwhelming majority of the teachers think the situation in their class improved remarkably and especially violence is less frequent. They themselves feel that the number of brutal incidents became a lot smaller. A lot of teacher wished for more advice though.

Our intervention programme and school team programme is presently beeing applied in schools in the region of Bern and to some extend in Zürich. It needs specially trained educational psychologist though, who are aquainted with the methods of group psychotherapy and familiar with the problems of schools and teaching. They either work in an educational counselling center as school psychologist or in our institute for conflict managment and Mythodrama.

Let me repeat the basic idea of this intervention programm.

Basic prinipals

1. Irritation

We look at schools as systems, with its corresponding cohesive forces. When violence occurs this system is often incapable of reacting. What it needs is an impulse from the outside: the system has to be shaken, so it can reflect on its own possibilties again and find means to deal with the problem. We work with this resulting irritation by presenting ourselves as advocatus diaboli, by making use of gruesome stories and by refusing to play the role allotted us by the parents.

2. Confrontation with the shadow

The symptom carries the cure. Our approach is, that we do not moralize, we don't try to remove the cause, but try to look at aggression and violence as an energy, which can be used positivly. Here we follow the ideas of C. G. Jung: we try to integrate the contents of the so-called shadow and don't repress them again. Violence among children might be an indication of a repressed shadow element, maybe there might be a way to include this messy side.

3. Commitment

Engaging in crisis intervention requires from the psychologist utter commitment. You cannot retain a loof academic attitude or remain the distinguished counsellor, when you stand in front of a group of disrudged (?), deviant juveniles, who at first seem to give you the look of contempt. But to our experience it is worth it, as these juveniles often are troubled and muddled up. Our intervention offers them a way to cooperate, to do something against violence, without having to submit to the grown-ups.

Major criterias of our intervention programm

- Irritation, mental movers
- concrete changes, in order to advocate change
- confrontation of the shadow
- group approach

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October 17th 1996

Dear Denise Gretchen

Encloused I am sending you a copy of my paper Violence in school. At the 104th Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association I didn't present the paper under the original titel (Steps toward positive school culture).

Sincerely,

Allan Guggenbühl